

## HEALTH / NATIONAL

# All-Black Team of Climbers Makes History After Reaching the Top of Mount Everest

Nationwide — A team of 7 Black climbers has made history as the first all-Black expedition to make it to the top of Mount Everest, which is the Earth's highest mountain above sea level.

Seven Full Circle Everest team members — Manoah Ainnu, Eddie Taylor, Rosemary Saal, Demond Mullins, Thomas Moore, James "KG" Kagami, and Evan Green — successfully made it to the summit of Mount Everest on May 12.

They made the attempt to summit the highest mountain in the world after countless hours of preparations, training, and dedication. It took them nearly 40 days to reach the top since they started the historic journey.

Moreover, Full Circle Everest is proud to have brought representation to the highest place on Earth wherein out of the over 10,000 summits as of 2020, only 10 Black climbers have reportedly summited. The team is hoping to change the future of mountaineering, making it more accessible to people of color.

The group wrote on their GoFundMe page, "Everest is not the end goal, but just the beginning. Our expedition will reshape the narrative of the outdoors to one that is inclusive and where everyone belongs. Each member of this team has a powerful story to share. Together, we speak to many histories, traditions, and ancestries."



## Black Teen Who Once Appeared on 'Jeopardy' Accepted to More Than 15 Colleges, Awarded \$2M in Scholarships

Nationwide — Rotimi Kukoyi, a Nigerian American teen from Hoover, Alabama, has been accepted to more than 15 universities including Yale and Harvard. He also received a total of \$2 million in scholarship offers.

Rotimi said he was inspired to strive harder academically after joining the "Jeopardy!" Teen Tournament in 2018. He was still a freshman at that time and he met outstanding students from across the country.

"It was really fun experience but also put me in contact with some pretty cool students from across the country," Kukoyi said on Good Morning America. "A lot of them are older and they're like seniors or juniors that applied to many prestigious schools a lot of them are attending prestigious universities now. So that was kind of my original inspiration to apply to those universities."

Rotimi, who became the first

Black National Merit Scholar at his school, was accepted to more than 15 prestigious universities including Yale, Harvard, Stanford, the University of Virginia, Vanderbilt, Emory, Rice, Johns Hopkins, Duke, the University of Alabama, Case Western Reserve University, UAB, Auburn University, Washington University in St. Louis, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Rotimi decided to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he was awarded its prestigious Morehead-Cain Scholarship, the oldest merit scholarship program in the country.

He has plans to pursue a career in public health to help others. His decision was triggered mostly by the things he saw during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"COVID really sparked [my interest in public health] because that was the first time that I really saw how clear the health inequities



were," he said. "African Americans had a much higher chance of dying from COVID than white Americans. It was almost like there were two separate pandemics impacting our nation, and we saw [some people] marginalized and



impacted way more.

"I want my legacy to be one that's focused on impacting other people. I suppose a lot of people in the pursuit of their own goals can kind of forget what it's all about."

## Meet O.N.E The Duo, a Black Mother and Daughter Country Music Group



Mother Tekitha Washington (on the right) and daughter Prana Supreme Diggs (on the left) pictured together. Photo courtesy - O.N.E The Duo

By Alexis Wray

Imagine you're 12 years old, and your mom is a part of a Grammy-nominated rap group. They just wrapped rehearsals after a long day and you're feeling bold and adventurous, so you jump on stage for your five minutes of fame. Little did you know, you would soon be sharing a spotlight with her.

O.N.E The Duo, a Black mother and daughter country and Americana music group formed last year after Prana Supreme Diggs, the daughter of Wu-Tang Clan's producer RZA, and Tekitha Washington the Wu-Tang's female vocalist, convinced her mother that they should make music together.

"Even before I could talk, music was the earliest form of communication between my mom and I. Music is the backdrop to many of our memories and has allowed us to see the world together," Prana told Reckon.

Their name, O.N.E The Duo reflects what each of them brings to their sound and how their personalities influence the music: O is observant, N is noetic, and E is effervescent.

Tekitha has always found opportunities to include music within Prana's life. Watching Prana learn lullabies, melodies and harmonizing are some of Tekitha's favorite memories.

"When she was two or three years

old, I made up a song I would sing to her at any given moment. Before long, she would sing along with me and it became one of the first songs that she learned how to harmonize," Tekitha said.

There once was a girl named Prana, her Mommy was the Queen. She dreamt of the things she wanted and she got everything. All the love. All the joy. Everything and more. There once was a girl named Prana, the princess was adored.

Now the group has laid roots in Nashville, TN, finding their inspiration in the Southern twang of pedal steel guitars, banjos and fiddles. While they incorporate rock n' roll and still find value in the genres like hip hop and R&B that Tekitha built her career on, the mother-daughter duo sought to create their own style with sounds that felt authentic to their personalities.

O.N.E The Duo also acknowledges that stepping into the country music scene has its challenges, but their purpose is to spread love and compassion.

"Gracefully navigating narrow-mindedness can be quite challenging. When people feel fearful or threatened, a general response will be defensiveness. And in some cases outright hatred for something they don't

want or care to understand," Tekitha tells Reckon.

For far too long, country music has been labeled as a white genre. Music scholars and critics have begun a renewed focus on the early influences of Black Southerners on the emergence of country music in the South. Today artists, like Brittney Spencer and Joy Oladokun are examples of the diversity that exists within the country music genre.

Prana expresses that O.N.E The Duo tries not to be reduced to the 'novelty' of being Black women doing country music and that they see Black country music artists like Charley Pride and Linda Martell as a few legends who have paved the way.

"Also to state simply, representa-

tion matters. There are many talented Black artists of all ages who love country music. They have valuable stories to tell that can unify a divided people from all walks of life," said Tekitha.

Music has often been a way to bring people together or inspire them. As Prana has watched her mother's music career throughout the year's inspiration and a strong sense of self are only a few of the many things Prana has taken from her mother's journey.

"My mom has shown me how vulnerability, especially within music, can heal people because it helps them feel less alone in their experiences. There is strength in vulnerability."

This article was first posted in Reckon

### LEGAL NOTICE

A Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 12, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. (Eastern) at the Development Resource Center, 1250 Market Street, First Floor Conference Room 1A, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402.

The TCC will take action on the following items:

- Approval of the May 10, 2022 TPO Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
- Open for Public Comment and Recommend to Approve by Resolution an Amendment to the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
  - Hamilton Place Interchange
  - SR-317 (Bonny Oaks PIN 112152.04)
  - CARTA Wayside Inductive Charging Expansion Project
- Recommend to Approve by Resolution the Regional Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Architecture and Deployment Plan
- Recommend to Approve by Resolution an Amendment to the FY 2022-23 Unified Planning Work Program

The public review and comment period for draft plans and programs will be used to satisfy the public participation requirements of the Federal Transit Act (49 USC Section 5307/5310/5339). Public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review of and comments will satisfy the Program of Projects requirements.

Meeting materials will be available for viewing on the web after July 1, 2022 at [www.chcrpa.org](http://www.chcrpa.org) under the Transportation Planning Organization meetings section, or at the Regional Planning Agency (RPA), 1250 Market Street, Suite 2000, Development Resource Center, Chattanooga, TN 37402. For a reasonable accommodation request or if you require language assistance, please notify the RPA three business days in advance of the meeting and staff will be glad to work with you in obliging any reasonable request. For a complete agenda or additional information, please call the RPA at 423-643-5900 or email [TPO@chattanooga.gov](mailto:TPO@chattanooga.gov).